



**USAID**  
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**AFGHANISTAN**

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

December 16-December 31, 2009

### INFRASTRUCTURE

#### **Tarakhil Power Plant Achieves Full Energy**

**Output:** On December 8, more Afghans in the capital city of Kabul gained access to locally produced power from the USAID-funded Tarakhil Power Plant. Engineers activated the plant's third and final power block, rendering the plant fully capable of producing the 105 megawatts of energy it was built to deliver.

In August 2009, President Hamid Karzai, Minister of Energy and Water Ismail Khan, and U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry cut the ribbon to celebrate the first megawatts of electricity generated by the new plant. Now, Tarakhil is producing power at maximum capacity and can provide electricity to more than 500,000 residents. Just in time for the long, cold winter, Kabul residents will have access to the electricity needed to heat and light their homes and businesses.



An Afghan engineer cleans an engine plate at the Tarakhil Power Plant.

PHOTO: USAID/IRP

The plant's future is in good hands and it will continue producing power for many years to come. Currently, Afghan engineers from Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (Electrical Utility Corporation of Afghanistan) are taking a two-year training course that teaches them every aspect of the plant's operation, from maintaining machinery to operating the computer monitoring system. According to the project manager, the Afghan engineers who will ultimately take charge of the plant "will know everything there is to know about the equipment, from the rags used to oil it to the robotic crane to repair it."



Kabul University faculty learn English to improve their teaching and research abilities.

PHOTO: USAID/AeQA

### EDUCATION

#### **English-language Training Advances University**

**Faculty and Staff:** Professors and employees of Kabul University recently began an eight-week intensive English course. The program provides English as a Second Language (ESL) to help faculty members make more effective use of academic resources that are published in English. University professors currently face challenges preparing up-to-date lesson materials for their classes because they often have to use textbooks published in English.

Currently, 45 university professors and staff, including 25 women from faculties such as Law and Political



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Sciences, Psychology, Science, Language and Literature, and Fine Arts, are enrolled in English classes provided by USAID through Afghan eQuality Alliances (AeQA). Developing proficiency in foreign languages is one major emphasis of the recently inaugurated Ministry of Higher Education Strategic Plan. USAID is offering similar English classes for faculty lecturers at Kabul Polytechnic University, Hirat University, Balkh University, Nangarhar University, and Sheik Zayed University in Khost.



A student at Turquoise Mountain's Institute for Afghan Arts and Architecture practices calligraphy.

PHOTO: Turquoise Mountain

### ECONOMIC GROWTH

**First Students Graduate from Turquoise Mountain's Institute for Afghan Arts and Architecture:** On December 17, 32 male and female Afghan students became the first graduates to complete a three-year course at the Turquoise Mountain's Institute for Afghan Arts and Architecture. The non-profit, non-governmental institute is partly funded by USAID and is Afghanistan's only City & Guilds-accredited vocational institution. The students from the Schools of Woodwork, Ceramics, and Calligraphy & Painting graduated with internationally recognized certificates, which provide them with respected credentials as they seek careers as designers, craftsmen, and entrepreneurs.

Turquoise Mountain has a comprehensive Graduate Opportunities Program to provide wide-ranging assistance to the graduates as they secure employment and/or further study in Afghanistan and abroad. For example, two students are applying for woodwork apprenticeships in the royal castles of London and Windsor, and many others have already found positions in Afghanistan. Opportunities such as these, which enable Afghans to gain skills and protect their cultural

heritage, will contribute to the country's future economic development and artistic tradition.

### PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

**Creating Jobs and Building Community Trust in Nuristan:** USAID is committed to supporting stability and community development in the most volatile provinces in Afghanistan. In Nuristan, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development program provides innovative grants that empower women and civil servants while earning the trust of local residents. In response to needs identified by community leaders, USAID recently allocated \$775,000 for development projects over the next seven months, which will create thousands of jobs for residents of the province. As the only civilian-led U.S. effort in Nuristan's Du Ab and Nurgaram districts, USAID's programs will focus on rural development, health, irrigation, and agriculture needs.



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The new programs will build on past successes. In November, USAID completed a health and hygiene training program for 30 Ministry of Public Health volunteer community health workers in Du Ab and Nurgaram. They, in turn, trained 3,000 community members, of which 481 were women. Trained health workers – especially women – are essential to reducing preventable childhood illnesses like diarrhea, as well as ensuring that women and children have access to healthcare near their homes.

Community and economic development projects can go a long way to help stabilize the province and deny recruitment opportunities to insurgents. "Community development is at the core of what USAID does in Afghanistan," said USAID Mission Director William M. Frej. "It helps the people of Afghanistan at the grass-root level while helping provincial and central government ministries deliver the services needed."



Community health workers receive training in rural Nuristan province.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



USAID and the PRT provided warm clothing, food, and heaters to victims of a rocket attack in Kapisa.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

### **USAID Assists Victims of Terror in Kapisa:**

Approximately three weeks after an indiscriminate rocket attack killed 53 civilians in Kapisa province, USAID joined the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to offer condolences to the victims' families and provide much-needed humanitarian assistance. The U.S. Government provided food, warm clothing, and heaters following a December 10 *shura*, or community gathering, during which the dead were mourned and provincial officials and religious leaders expressed solidarity with the community.

The newly elected head of the Provincial Council offered prayers for the victims and joined the local mayor and district governor in thanking USAID for its

support. The \$10,000 USAID grant, supplemented by \$5,000 from the PRT Commander's Emergency Response Fund, was made possible through the Local Governance and Community Development program, USAID's flagship counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan. USAID's efforts to reach out to communities in times of need demonstrates its commitment to improving the lives of Afghan citizens.